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**TAJIKISTAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Irrigation Increases Farm Production

**USAID project helps Tajik farmers work together in restoring their irrigation systems and increasing incomes from their fields.**



***“Farmers are now optimistic, since they have received huge benefits from the participation in the USAID-funded Water Users Association Support Program. They now have concrete plans on how to solve their own problems,”***

- Makhadali Khuramov, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Samarkandi Water Users Association, Rudaki District, Tajikistan.

Makhadali Khuramov, who leases two hectares of land in Rudaki District, Tajikistan, had struggled for years to obtain water to irrigate his fields adequately. Taking matters into his own hands, Khuramov attempted to create an association of water users to resolve his and his neighbors' irrigation problems. Although he submitted all the necessary documents to the Union of Dekhkan Farms, the association's registration was never completed as his neighbors were reluctant to join in, doubtful that they could collectively resolve their water management problems through an association.

Then, in February 2005, representatives from the USAID-funded Water User Association Support Program came to his community to discuss the assistance they could offer in establishing a water user association. At first, the local farmers, including Khuramov, were suspicious of their intentions. But after several discussions farmers agreed to work with the program and to establish a water users association, which was named the “Samarkandi” water users association (WUA). Khuramov, who actively participated in organizing and registering the association, was elected the Chairman of its Board of Directors.

Upon registration, the “Samarkandi” association received a grant from the USAID-funded program and set to rehabilitate their irrigation and drainage system. Within months, water flowed from the canal for the first time in many years. The association also put in place a management system to ensure fair delivery of water. With a steady flow of water, Khuramov and his neighbors focused on growing their gardens and orchards and reaping benefits from their fields. While in 2005, Khuramov's income from his strawberry harvest was 200 Tajik Somoni (\$60), in 2006, he also grew melons, eggplants, peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, and pumpkins, and earned twenty times higher income, 4,000 Somoni (\$1,200).

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the project has been the change in farmers' attitudes and the sense of empowerment they have gained in working collectively together to improve their lives, notes Khuramov. “Now we have a real opportunity to solve our problems together, not only those related to irrigation and water management, but also other issues related to agriculture and community problems. Farmers are now optimistic, since they have received huge benefits from the teamwork with the USAID-funded Water Users Association Support Program. Now they have concrete plans and proposals on how to solve their own problems,” says Khuramov.